and commercials, irrespective of length, either on film, videotape or videodisc, which can be shown in cinemas, on television or on video recorders jointly invested in and produced by producers from the two countries and made in accordance with the terms of recognition given by the competent authorities of India and Italy under this Agreement. New forms of audio-visual production and distribution may also be included in the Agreement by mutual consent of both countries.

Telecast by private TV channels through DTH

2740. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that Doordarshan has allowed private TV channels to telecast through its DTH basket free of cost;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the rationale therefor;

(c) whether such practice would augur well for the public broadcasters particularly when it is already incurring losses; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Currently, 14 free-to-air private TV channels in addition to 19 Doordarshan channels are available on DD Direct+, Doordarshan's DTH platform. The private channels are presently being carried without any carriage fee. The private channels were included in the bouquet in order to reach out to wider audience and make the service popular.

(c) and (d) Prasar Bharati, as a Public Service Broadcaster, is not driven by commercial considerations alone. Prasar Bharati is hosting private TV channels free of charge for a period of two years as an exploratory measure.

Media Commission

2741. DR. VIJAY MALLYA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state: